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AMSTERDAM, AMSTEL HOTEL AND HIGH BRIDGE [From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

Artistic Value of Water Fronts and Bridges in City Building

THE first groups and gatherings of human habitations having undoubtedly sprung up along water courses in valleys and on the shores of lakes and seas, it is not strange that one associates the idea of a water front with a town of any importance, nor that most towns of importance are so situated as to command a point of vantage upon some large body of water or along some navigable stream. The importance of a water front from a practical standpoint being so firmly rooted in the human mind through long tradition, it seems strange that its aesthetic significance should ever be overlooked or lost sight of. Yet to many Americans the word "water front" is far from carrying with it an inevitable suggestion of elegance or charm. It brings to mind quite often rough

and rugged docks, flocks of black and ungainly freight vessels, piers and pilings of dank and rotting wood, shed like buildings rolling columns from smokestacks, rats, slums, and crimes of violence, as often indeed as any more delightful or charming picture.

A fortunate exception is the American city or town whose water front along its entire course is free from any or all of these unlovely things. The most deplorable aspect of the entire matter is what we have grown to expect and accept them as a necessary accompaniment of traffic and complex civilization. It seems never to have occurred to many of us that conditions could and should be vastly different and that a waterfront is an asset from the standpoint of beauty and grace.

This is one of the reasons why the Chicago Plan Commission has found it necessary to conduct a most elaborate campaign of education and why everyone who lives and works in Chicago should attend the lectures of Mr. Walter D. Moody, shedding so much light upon this vital subject. These lectures are, in the first place, travelogues of no mean importance, with interesting views from the fairest cities of war swept Europe and even of far Asia and our little known neighbor, South America.

It is a revelation and an inspiration to gaze upon these pictures, showing what has been done, and presaging what may be done, for a finer and fairer Chicago. The accompanying illustrations are gleaned from the many views which are presented in connection with these lectures as colored slides, and the facts from the accompanying lecture which holds the listener alert and intent to the end, and from an interview with the great globe trotter Burton Holmes.

That not only the lake front but the winding banks of Chicago's ill-famed river should offer possibilities for enchanting

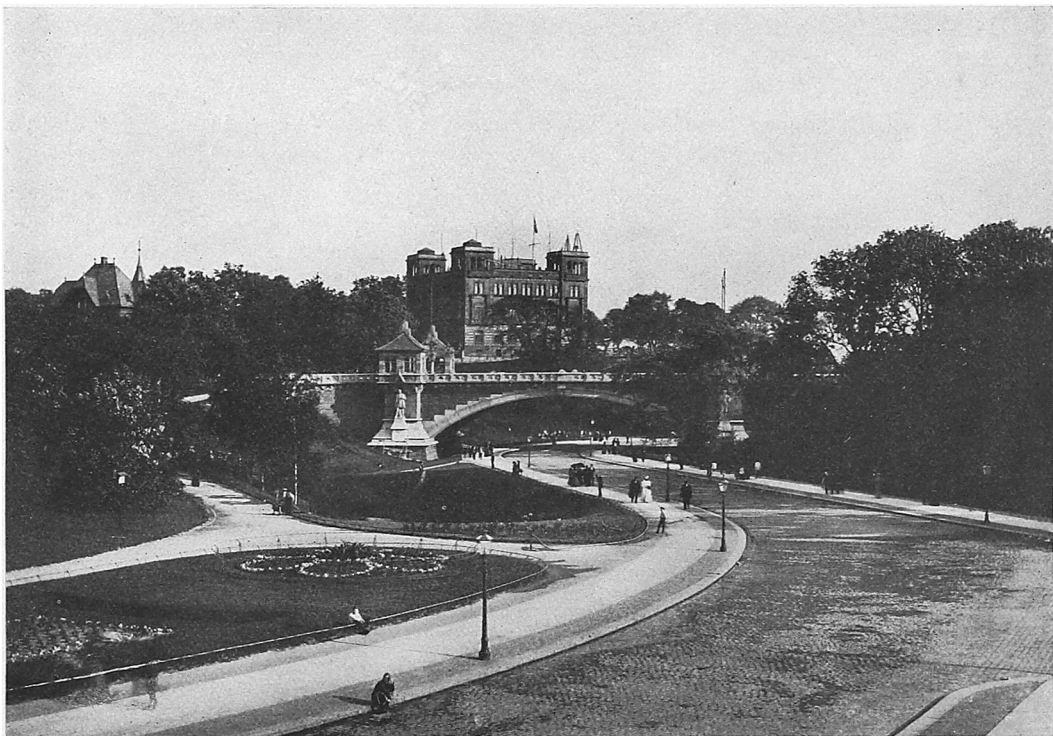
promenades and pleasing vistas seems at first the vision of some stupendous dreamer, whose very veins were filled with the milk of the poppy. The simple straightforward presentation of the matter with the incontestable proofs of photographs, showing what has been done along other streams no more favored by nature, makes it clear in a short time that such a plan is not only practical but an absolute necessity, destined to full realization in the none too distant future.

These illustrations show how lovely waterfronts may be with solid embankments of granite or concrete and double decked boulevards, affording a lower street for necessary traffic and an upper one as a promenade. Nothing could be at once so shocking and so illuminating as the appearance on the screen of any section of the Chicago River, just after one of these lovely views of well kept streams in cities of other lands. With this contrast the case is made. The argument clinched, the point demonstrated, established and visualized beyond any possibility of contention. In



AMSTERDAM, BRIDGE OF AMSTEL RIVER

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]



HAMBURG, HELIGOLAND AVENUE, NAMED FROM THE ACQUISITION OF HELIGOLAND BY GERMANY IN EXCHANGE FOR ZANZIBAR

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

the flash of a shutter, the changing of a slide, one's viewpoint is changed for all time to come.

Mr. Moody, however, both as an individual and a representative of the Plan Commission, is an optimist, and hardly a critic, but rather a mentor, pointing the way to better things, and let us hope a prophet. His first view shows Chicago "as it was in the beginning," seventy-seven years ago when a huddle of ten little stores and cabins marked the site of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett Company's establishment on the river. When we think of Chicago as she is now we feel that almost anything might be possible in another three score years and ten, in view of what has happened during the past seven to eight decades.

As the lecturer observes, the situation of Chicago is unique in all the world, since it alone possesses in such abundance the three

elements of a city's success—richness of resources at hand, richness of territory in which to ship its commerce, and unlimited transportation facilities. Of Chicago alone can it be said that within a radius of five hundred miles are fifty-three millions of people who can take a train after dinner and arrive in the city for breakfast. The Mississippi valley is the richest in the world and could easily maintain a hundred millions of people. The surrounding territory possesses great resources in copper, iron, fruit, vegetables, farm products and clay and cement materials.

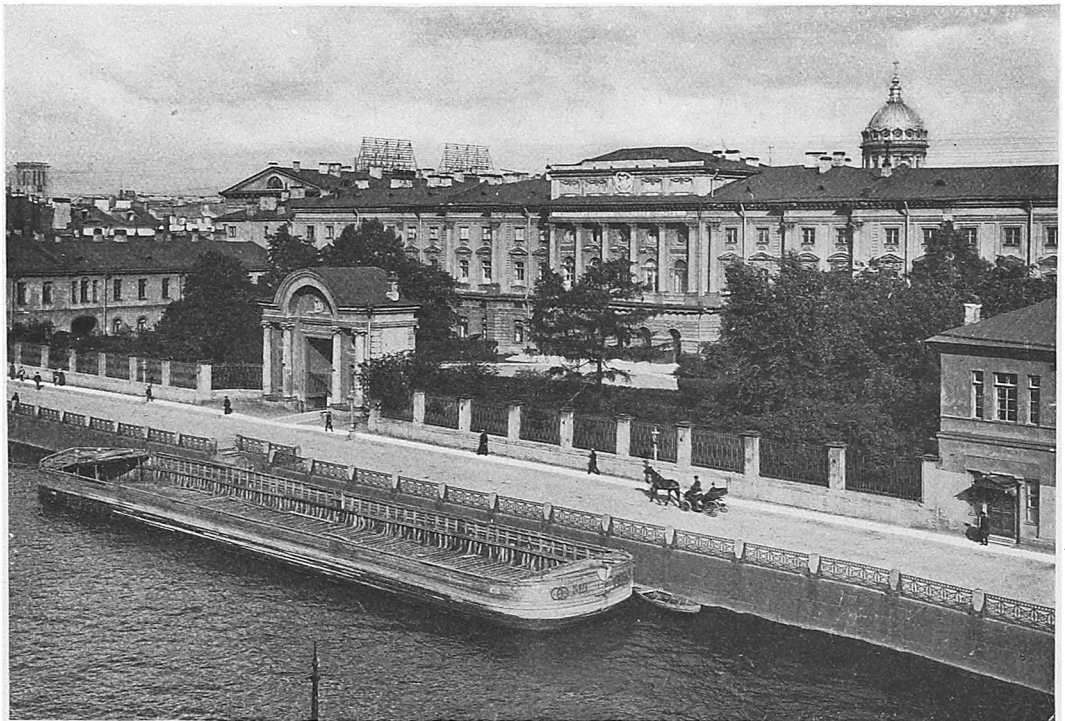
James J. Hill is said to have observed that when there were twenty millions of people on the Pacific coast Chicago would be the metropolis of the world. Inasmuch as there are now five million, we may expect the prophecy of this empire builder to some day be realized. Interior towns in-



LONDON, VIEW OF THAMES EMBANKMENT FROM WATERLOO BRIDGE WITH BLACK FRIARS BRIDGE IN THE BACKGROUND [From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]



BUDAPEST, FRANCIS JOSEPH QUAY WITH DANUBE WATER FRONT AS SEEN FROM THE CHAIN BRIDGE [From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]



WATERFRONT IN PETROGRAD, GOVERNMENT BUILDING
ARCHITECTURE REFLECTING THE INFLUENCE OF PETER
THE GREAT AND HIS LONG RESIDENCE IN GERMANY



PRAGUE, BOHEMIA, MOLDAU RIVER WITH
THE CATHEDRAL AND ROYAL PALACE OR
HORADSCHIN ON THE OPPOSITE HILLS

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

deed are becoming the metropolises of all countries on account of their central location. Chicago being almost in the exact center of the United States is undoubtedly destined to be the metropolis of this country within the lifetime of the present generation.

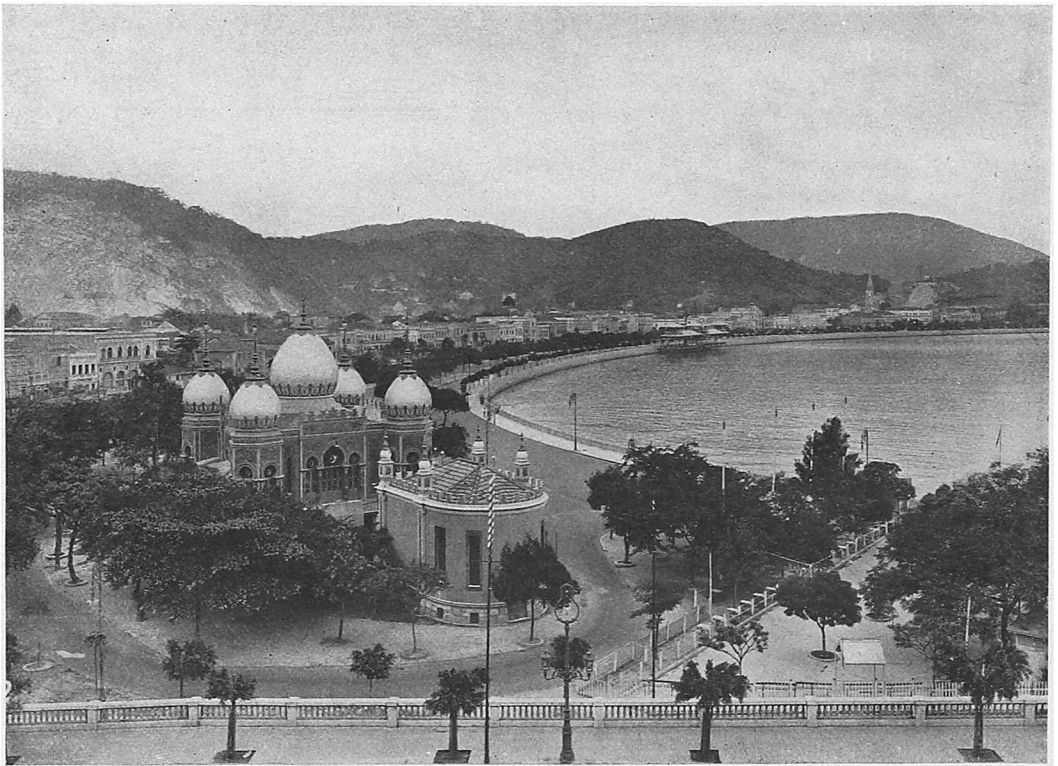
No satisfaction, however, can be felt in mere greatness unless the city shall grow in beauty, convenience and livableness as it grows in size. With this end in view every effort should be made to take advantage of the opportunities for beauty which the location of the city presents and they are indeed many, with the miles of frontage on a fine inland sea, the winding course of a river and unlimited space for parks available. Had such a plan as that of D. H. Burnham been evolved immediately after the fire instead of after the world's fair, the work of making Chicago an ideal city might, of course, have been simpler; how-

ever, other cities have been rebuilt in the face of greater obstacles and at greater expense, so that we should not be discouraged by the conditions confronting us.

Paris in 1853 adopted the Baron Haussman Plan and remodeled the city at a cost of \$265,000,000. The work was well worth while as it has made the French capital known far and wide as a synonym for civic beauty, thus increasing the revenue from tourists to say nothing of the increase in pleasure, health and convenience of its citizens. Had London adopted the Plan of Sir Christopher Wren after the great fire in 1666 that city might now be noted for symmetry instead of for its curious narrow and crooked streets and quaint though inconvenient neighborhoods. In 1855 the people of London began to realize the necessity for great changes and since then they have worked, and under great handicap, to rectify the mistakes of past genera-



PRAGUE. SHOWING THE TOWER THROUGH WHICH [From Chicago Plan Commission Collection] ONE PASSES TO THE CHARLES BRIDGE, A LOVELY STRUCTURE ADORNED WITH STATUES



RIO DE JANEIRO. SUBURB OF BOTAFOGO WITH ORIENTAL KIOSK, OR COFFEE HOUSE, FOR THE SERVING OF BRAZILIAN COFFEE

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

tions. The cutting through of two new streets cost \$125,000,000 for land damages alone to say nothing of the amount expended for labor and materials. This should be a warning to the citizens of Chicago, prompting them to make use of every opportunity for improvement at the earliest possible moment, before the congestion of population shall render changes so costly.

The twenty accompanying illustrations tell better than any words what may be accomplished toward the beautifying of cities along their waterfronts. Here we see views from many countries, and are impressed with the thoroughness with which such things have been handled abroad. We marvel at the beauty of the far northern city of Stockholm, of the far eastern city of Calcutta, and the beauties of Budapest, Petrograd and Tientsin, of Amsterdam,

Naples, Munich, Zurich and Hamburg, and not least of all of Rio de Janeiro. Here indeed is a neighbor that puts us to shame, for her bay side boulevard, or sea promenade, which in the beginning was but six miles long, has been extended to cover the waterfront of the entire city and suburbs. Burton Holmes declares this to be the most beautiful drive in the world, although it has only been completed within the last ten years. One of our illustrations shows the Oriental Kiosk, or coffee house for the serving of Brazilian coffee, which is located on a continuation of the drive in the suburb of Botafogo.

Our views from Munich, Bremen, Zurich and Hamburg show the thoroughness with which things are accomplished in the land of the Kaiser. They are interesting at this time when German efficiency has at-

tracted the attention of the entire world. Whatever one's sentiments may be it is impossible not to admire the completeness of these works, so characteristic of the steady, thorough German people. We even see where imperial Government had its advantages, a single and central authority rendering the carrying out of great works free from complications which must be reckoned with under a popular form of government. The sovereign people are undoubtedly wiser in the aggregate than any monarch, but it takes them longer to execute their commands and realize their desires. The stone embankments and beautiful bridges in these pictures are truly an inspiration to any city possessing a river front.

Amsterdam, too, exhibits some charming scenes along the Amstel River. Its principal hotel is located on the river front commanding a pleasing view. The waterfront view from Petrograd is interesting in

a day when this city, which has rejected the German name bestowed upon it by the great Peter, still reflects his influence and that of the enemy's country in the architecture of some of the leading buildings.

The two views from Prague are quaint and characteristic of the old Bohemian town. The tower of the Charles Bridge is famed among tourists and the bridge itself is a structure which excites admiration and affords good suggestions for such works of utility.

Our view from Budapest shows the Francis Joseph Quay and a practical and artistic handling of the waterfront problem. Naples is more picturesque, though less utilitarian, which is as one would expect. The views, however, are replete with beauty, nature and man having combined in supreme effort to present a scene of unrivaled charm. Our Stockholm view gives a glimpse of the park on the island where summer concerts are given. In re-



RIO DE JANEIRO. BAYSIDE ROULEVARD COMPLETED WITHIN THE LAST TEN YEARS. EXTENDING AROUND THE WATER FRONT OF ENTIRE CITY AND SUBURBS

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]



CALCUTTA. GENERAL POST OFFICE ON WATER FRONT. THE "BLACK HOLE" IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER TO THE RIGHT.

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

gard to these musical events Burton Holmes relates an amusing incident, showing how summer is appreciated at all costs in the northern latitudes. In this summer garden the people of Stockholm gather on the evenings of their few brief warm days, to listen to the music and sup hot punch. As the cool evening advances the waiters serve each guest with a red blanket in which they sit wrapped until a late hour enjoying the delights of a summer garden and suggesting to the American tourists a party of festive Indians.

The Thames embankment is a world famous example of the expediency of banking up a waterfront with granite. The picture gives some idea of the beautiful promenade thus afforded. Calcutta shows British influence in the construction of its waterfront and government buildings.

With the exception of our north lake shore no such charming waterfront views could be gathered in Chicago. The Plan, however, offers inspiration and we might say consolation, for we may at least reflect that when our lake shore lagoons, boulevards and pleasure piers are completed we shall have something at which all the world shall marvel and which nothing can overshadow, either from a standpoint of beauty or stupendous accomplishment.

It is urged by those who have been giving to this Plan the best of their time and attention for years that we watch every opportunity to obtain the rights to improve the river front as the occasion presents itself. An effort was made in this direction at the time of the granting of a new franchise to the railroads along the river from Jackson Blvd. to Twelfth Street, and noth-

ing but the absolute impossibility of constructing the desired improvements and leaving sufficient track space prevented the plan being put into effect, without modification, along the river for that distance. It is expected, however, that this section will be appropriately treated and the incident shows the alertness of those who are presiding over the destiny of the Plan.

The foregoing illustrations are only a small collection of the splendid panorama of the views of famous cities and other subjects collateral to Chicago's city planning effort, as shown in the lecture course of the Plan Commission. In these lectures there are unfolded to public gaze vistas of beautiful central parks, scenes of the world's famous thoroughfares, views of construction and preparation of city planning projects in Europe and America, and many other interesting subjects, all for the purpose of creating interest, arousing desire

and capturing resolve on the part of Chicago's citizens to achieve at home what has been accomplished abroad.

The Chicago Plan Commission is now engaged with the city on important work on the Plan. The Twelfth Street Improvement, the West Side terminal development, the Michigan Avenue improvement, the new West Side Post Office, the Pleasure Pier and Outer Harbor, the Field Museum on the lake front, the West Side Austin Park, and the great south shore Lake Front Parkway that soon must come, form a group of civic improvements about to be realized which, for magnitude and simultaneous development, surpass anything ever attempted in an American city. These are no longer mere paper plans to be accomplished in the dim future. Every one of these improvements is in a more or less advanced stage of procedure in the workshop of city departments.

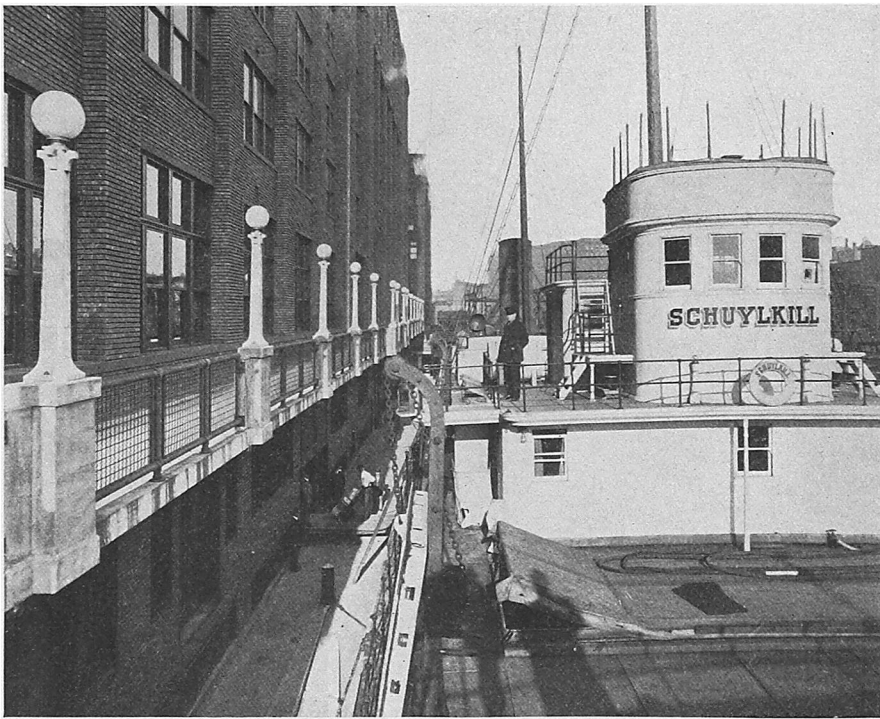


STOCKHOLM, WATERFRONT WITH NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING ON THE LEFT, CAFE AND PARK ON ISLAND WHERE SUMMER CONCERTS ARE GIVEN

[From Chicago Plan Commission Collection]

Recently one of our great wholesale houses in constructing a new warehouse along the river adopted the double level arrangement, with a lower quay for shipping and an upper promenade, made agreeable by a row of ornamental lights. This building gives a good idea of how attractive the entire river front might be should other corporations having warehouses along the stream adopt the same plan. It also shows the influence that the plan is beginning to

exert upon private individuals and enterprises. This is not the least important of its function, for an architectural scheme affording inspiration to builders of large edifices, in this one thing alone, can exert a great influence upon the appearance of the city. With the support and co-operation of men of capital and of the citizens in general the plan should write itself large upon the landscape and the history of this great town.



RIVER FRONT OF NEW REID-MURDOCK BUILDING, SHOWING BALCONY WITH ORNAMENTAL LIGHTS. IS FIRST ATTEMPT MADE TO CARRY OUT THE SUGGESTION OF THE CHICAGO BEAUTIFUL PLAN TO EMBELLISH THE WATER FRONT.